

Fitri's timely return



SUPER FOUR RESULTS AND FIXTURES

ASIA CUP HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

MALAYSIA	3	PAKISTAN	2
INDIA	1	SOUTH KOREA	1

> TODAY
SOUTH KOREA vs PAKISTAN 5pm
INDIA vs MALAYSIA 7.30pm

(All matches in Malaysian time)

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Eyes on the ball: Malaysia's Tengku Ahmad Tajuddin (left) vying for the ball with a Pakistan player in the Super Four match at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium in Dhaka, Bangladesh, yesterday.

Midfielder scores as Malaysia snap winless streak against Pakistan

By S. RAMAGURU

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia have finally overcome the Pakistan jinx in the Asia Cup hockey tournament.

Having never won in their previous 10 meetings, Malaysia fought back to win 3-2 in their opening Super Four match at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium in Dhaka, Bangladesh, yesterday.

Malaysia had lost nine games and drawn once with Pakistan in the tournament and it looked like a defeat was on the cards again.

Three-time champions Pakistan took the lead after just a minute of play with Mohamed Umar Bhutta scoring a field goal after a fast

counter-attack.

Malaysia, however, recovered with a 10th minute equaliser when defender Mohamed Razie Rahim made no mistake with a drag flick from their first penalty corner.

Pakistan again surged ahead in the 19th minute. From a free hit by Abu Mahmud, Mohamed Yaqoob sounded the board in the 19th minute.

Mohamed Shahril Saabah then came to Malaysia's rescue by scoring a field goal in the 25th minute to make it 2-2 at half-time.

In the 34th minute, Malaysia were awarded a penalty stroke after a foul by Pakistan goalkeeper Mahzar Abbas.

Midfielder Fitri Saari made no mistake to secure all the points for Malaysia.

It was a timely return for Fitri. He had returned to Kuala Lumpur on Saturday to be with his sick child and only flew back to Dhaka on Tuesday.

With the win, Malaysia are on course for Sunday's final. Coach Stephen van Huizen's side had qualified for the Super Four round after topping Group B. The top two sides in the four-team Super Four will play for the title.

Malaysia's second match is against India today. India were held to a 1-1 draw by South Korea in their opening match yesterday.

Said Stephen: "Our players were fully aware of the need to collect all three points against Pakistan. So, it was a good and important win today. This Super Four format is tough and every match and goal counts."